

worms. The wealth of a strong, young bird was at his disposal.

It was 8 in the evening of our fifth day out-of-doors. The woodlands were full of Olive-backed Thrushes and Hermit Thrushes that had come down to the swale to drink and bathe with the Robins. I called the Thrush a full half hour before he answered me in the usual grove. He came reluctantly. He was nearly as large as a full-grown bird. His tail was two inches long. When I called, the woods seemed alive with Thrushes. To my "Come, Pet!" the Hermits responded *chuck! chuck! p-e-e-p!* and the Olive-backed answered *whit! whit! whit! whit-ye, whit-ye-er!* The Thrushes were in full song. The warm, misty, moonlit woods fairly palpitated with their wonderfully beautiful strains.

The young Thrush partook of thirteen small grasshoppers. As I put him on a high perch for the night he floated out into the swale. I looked for him carefully in the low spruce where he seemed to alight. He was not here, but I heard the plashing of his wings in one of the sedgy little pools. The Olive-backed Thrushes called persistently, insistently, a few feet from where I stood.

The moonlight, the mist, and the birds were bewitching, but it was growing late and I had to tear myself away.

After this expeience I called and hunted for the Thrush several days, but he never came again to my summons. He had heard "the call of the wild" and responded!

HOUSE WRENS AS I KNOW THEM.

BY MARY E. HATCH.

I have always been especially fond of birds, but particularly is this true of the little house wren.

While I watch eagerly each spring for the return of the birds, and rejoice in seeing each new species come back, yet there is a little more joy experienced upon seeing my favorite wrens once more than in beholding all the others.

Usually I have been content merely to watch the wrens in their nest building; their squabbles among themselves and with other birds, becoming their protector when necessary. Truly, these little mites are most companionable, original and amusing.

However, in the spring of 1912, I had both an unusually good nest for closer observations and the time to devote to it. This particular box was not the bird's first choice by any means. Three others were tried, only to be given up, and when it was accepted finally, some of the twigs taken to the other boxes were laboriously hauled out of the little holes and carried to this new nest box, notwithstanding the fact that twigs were to be found in abundance within a few feet of the accepted box.

The nest was begun May 4th and the first egg was laid May 12th. One egg each day was deposited in the nest, until there were eight. They began to hatch the 30th—one each day for seven days. The eighth never hatched.

Tiny spiders were fed to the young wrens first; then very small bugs; then larger ones; and finally beetles, crickets, larger spiders, moths, worms, etc., were crammed into the yawning mouths. The fledglings grew very fast, leaving the nest the 18th of June.

The very next day the same pair of wrens began a new nest in another box on the same porch. The first egg was laid the 23d, which shows the birds were not so fastidious in its construction, for it took but four days to complete it, while the first required eight. Five eggs were laid this time, and five new wrens began to shift for themselves in the course of two weeks or so.

Wrens will build near your house or within a shed if there is any chance to get into it. They do not always demand a carefully made nest box. In fact, sometimes they seem to prefer simpler quarters. One year I placed a branch from a tree in my summer kitchen, and at its end had a good box with a door the size of a quarter of a dollar in it. I find this size is just right to admit wrens and shut out sparrows.

This arrangement was all right so far as the path to the nest went; but, instead of building in the box, the birds went a little beyond and built upon an overturned scrub brush lying on the scantling.

I know of a pair once placing their nest in a clothespin basket and on top of the clothespins. Of course they were left unmolested to raise their brood. Another built in an empty syrup can.

I find wrens like to have a good approach to their summer homes. They appreciate a ledge, limb, or anything upon which they can first alight.

This year (1915) I had four nest boxes—two under porches and two in trees. The one in the arbor vitae tree was chosen first; then one on the back porch; then one on the front porch; but the one in the elm tree, for some reason, was not used.

There was something about the nest on the back porch that was not altogether satisfactory, for they began a nest there several times, but left to start new ones within the cornice of the roof. These places were one after the other boarded up, thus shutting them out; and finally they began on the porch nest in earnest. They raised six birds here, and found porches so satisfactory, they took the other one for their second nest, where they raised but three birds.

The largest brood any of my birds has ever had is seven; but a neighbor had nine in one nest this summer. My last brood left here July 31st—somewhat late; but there was one in another neighbor's yard that stayed until August 20th.

Wrens are most sociable, and show very plainly that they like people. They seem to enjoy the coming and going—even though the screen door bangs quite often. During those days when they are feeding the little ones, they do more or less scolding of the people whom they have adopted; but do we not likewise grow impatient and irritable with our best beloved when we are busy, anxious and harassed? With all our faults they love us still; and will build nests about us every season if we put up boxes, drive away cats, sparrows

and other enemies—thus showing them we are interested and want them for neighbors.

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AN UNINTENTIONAL BIRD PRESERVE.

BY C. W. G. EIFRIG.

Some twenty-eight years ago Mr. Edward C. Waller, of River Forest, bought a tract of a hundred acres of land in the northern part of this village. This is now one of the finest suburbs of Chicago, being separated from the metropolis by Oak Park, another beauty spot in the outskirts of the great city, but at that time largely a more or less swampy prairie. Although bought for the sole reason to be later on sold again, Mr. Waller immediately started to improve the land by planting great quantities of fine shrubs and trees on it, in straight lines, to border the streets that would later have to cross the tract, and in irregular groves and clumps. Nearly all native species of shrubs and trees that can be enumerated, together with many exotic ones, found places in this new beauty spot. It is even said that the owner bought out two nurseries to get enough material. Although at that time houses were few and far between, yet the owner soon found that men and boys would come and cut down some of his largest trees for firewood or other purposes, and the evergreens, probably, for Christmas trees. To stop this he erected an eight-foot barbed wire fence around the tract of eighty acres, which is now between Chicago Avenue and Division Street, north and south, and between Lathrop and Park Avenues, east and west. Several men were employed summer and winter to keep the place in order. A house and barn are in the center of the tract. All this has now, after a quarter of a century, resulted in as fine a private park and botanical garden, so to say, as can be imagined, as idyllic a spot as can be made away from hills or mountains and in the absence of brook, pond or lake. For perfectly idyllic conditions of scenery these are undoubtedly indispensable. In May and June especially the many species of *spirea*, *lonicera*, lilac,